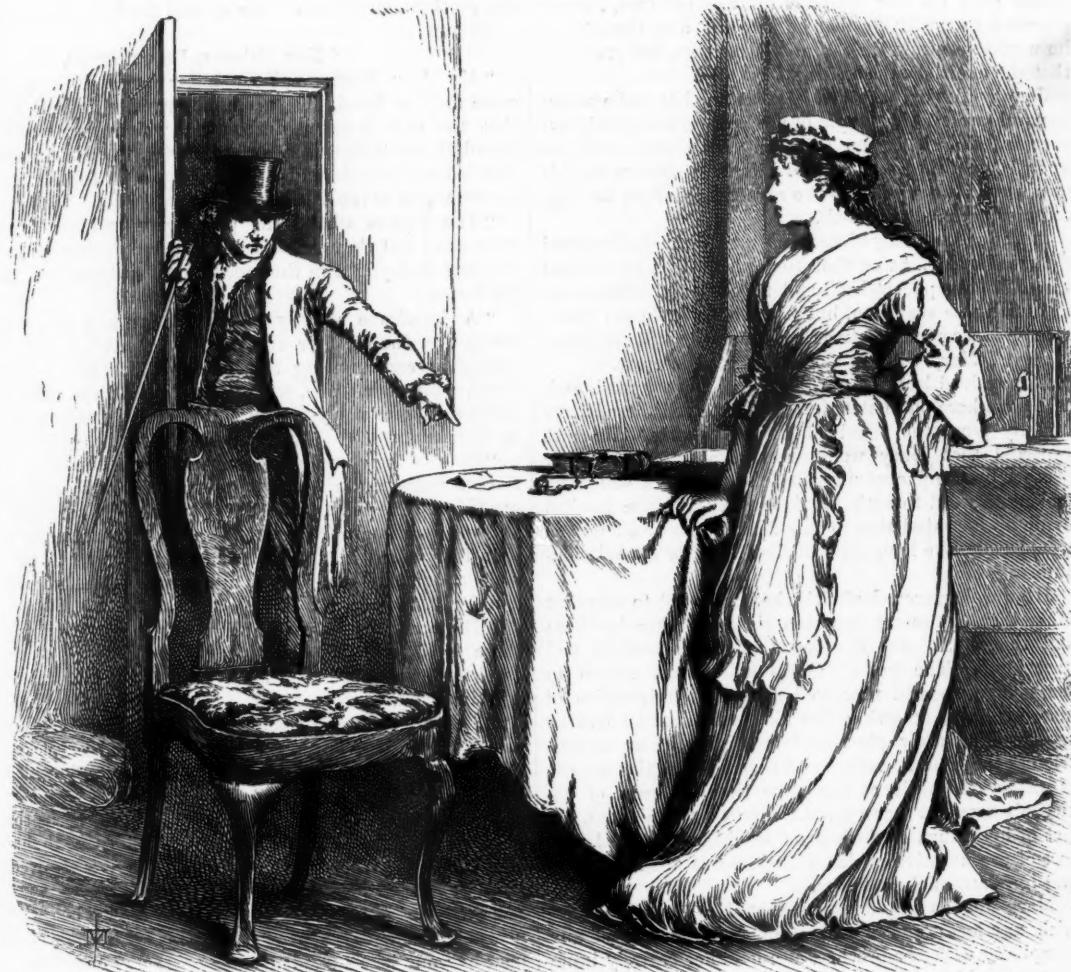


THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Couper.*



AN ABRUPT DEPARTURE.

THE MORTONS OF MORTON HALL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT VAN BROEK PROPERTY."

CHAPTER XXI.—MR. ASTON RECEIVES AN UNWELCOME LETTER FROM NEW ORLEANS.

OCEAN steam navigation was but a doubtful dream of the future at the period to which this history relates, and the sailing-packets of those days, though fleet vessels of their class, were more dependent upon wind and weather than the steamships of the present period. They were often days, and sometimes weeks, behind their time, and this happened to be the case with the

packet that was due at the date at which the present chapter opens.

Three months had elapsed since Henry Talbot had embarked for New Orleans, and his sister Mary—inasmuch as he had promised to write, if it were but a line, the moment he stepped on shore at New Orleans—was anxiously awaiting the news of his arrival. She made sure that the packet now due at Falmouth would bring the eagerly looked-for letter from her brother.

Mr. Aston (as I shall still designate him) had completely recovered his ordinary robust health, and had become so partial to St. David, and the new friends he

had found in the little secluded Cornish village, that he felt greatly inclined to make it his permanent home, though he was still doubtful whether it would be necessary for him to return to America to make arrangements respecting the vast property he possessed in that country, or whether he might not safely trust those arrangements to his son.

Nothing had been heard of the lost pocket-book or its contents, and, as the individual most concerned in the loss chose to be silent on the subject, no one else troubled himself in the matter. Mr. Sinclair and his friends, indeed, were of opinion that Mr. Aston secretly believed, as they did, that he had lost his pocket-book during his visit to Falmouth, the day before he was seized with his last attack of illness; but that, having asserted so positively that he had lost it in the village, he would not draw back from his assertion, and preferred that the affair should be forgotten.

Jemmy Tapley, who had been deputed to make secret research among the people of the village, completely exonerated the fishermen from any complicity with, or knowledge of the robbery; and if the old seaman had his own suspicions relative to the mysterious affair, he kept these suspicions to himself.

It has been already hinted that a suspicion had entered the mind of Mr. Aston that Henry Talbot had possessed himself of the pocket-book and its contents. He strove to banish this suspicion, but was unable to do so; yet—though less communicative than usual—he still continued to regard Mary with an almost paternal interest.

He received letters from America by every mail, and, as I have heretofore stated, always received these letters directly from the hand of the postmaster. He also expected that Mary would receive a letter from her brother by the packet now due, the arrival of which he looked forward to with no little anxiety, since he had made up his mind that in case Mary received a letter he would make the long delayed disclosure of his relationship.

He was, however, doubtful whether or not to acquaint Mary with his secret suspicion relative to her brother; and this doubt was the cause of much anxiety and uneasiness. The young man's subsequent return to the village seemed now to be but a confirmation of his guilt, since, knowing that the individual he had so cruelly and basely plundered was lying in an unconscious condition, he returned without the slightest peril of detection, while at the same time, in case of his victim's eventual recovery, and discovery of his loss, the fact of his return to the village would be regarded as a sort of presumptive evidence that he was alike innocent and ignorant of the robbery.

Mary was as yet unaware that Mr. Aston had met with any loss; and of course he acquitted her of any complicity with her brother, and held her entirely innocent. Could he have hoped that she could be kept in ignorance of the theft, and the circumstances under which it was committed, he would have remained silent on the subject. But he could not entertain any such hope. He, holding the suspicion he did, could neither speak of Henry as he had formerly spoken of him, nor could he feel himself justified in fulfilling the promises he had made to the young man to advance his interests in America; yet it would be necessary, if he disclosed his relationship, to explain to his niece why he had cast off his nephew. He felt that it would be a painful and delicate matter to acquaint a fond, unsuspecting sister with his suspicions, and he naturally shrunk from the unpleasant task.

The American packet arrived at Falmouth eight days

behind its time; and, as usual, Mr. Aston went to the town to receive his letters from the postmaster. An hour after his arrival at Falmouth he was seated in a private room in one of the hotels of the town, with a heap of letters and newspapers on a table by his side.

He had already read the letters from his son and daughter, and he now selected one, hap-hazard, from the heap.

It chanced to be from a merchant of New Orleans, with whom he had business dealings, and to whom he had written that a young friend (Henry Talbot) was about to sail for the "Crescent City," on board the ship Amazon, and to request the merchant to show the young man all the attention in his power during his sojourn in the southern metropolis. He opened the letter and read as follows:—

"New Orleans, December 10, 18—

"My dear Morton,—Your letter dated 10th Sept. came duly to hand. I regret, however, to inform you that the ship Amazon, on board of which your young friend Henry Talbot was, as per advice, to embark, was boarded and plundered by pirates in the Gulf of Mexico, on the night of the 4th inst.

"The pirates spared the passengers and crew from massacre; but they scuttled the ship before they quitted her, and at daylight in the morning all on board took to the boats.

"A hurricane shortly afterwards sprung up, and swept over the Gulf for two days with terrific violence; and, after encountering terrible hardships, two of the boats, with their crews, were picked up off the coast of Cuba, and were safely landed and hospitably entertained at Havanna.

"Four of their number, however, had perished during the hurricane, and the survivors were almost in a dying condition. Happily, however, all eventually recovered, and were sent on to New Orleans. From them we learn that four boats in all, all scantily supplied with provisions, quitted the ship only a few minutes before she foundered.

"The boats were separated during the hurricane, and there is little doubt that all on board the pinnace and the long-boat, numbering twenty-two, crew and passengers included, have perished. * * *

"I have just learnt, since the above was written, that one of the missing boats, the long-boat, has been picked up in the Gulf, bottom upwards. The pinnace, in which was the captain, several ladies, and your friend, is still missing; and, as she is said to have been the most deeply-laden boat, there is little doubt as to her fate. This is all the information we have yet received. * * *

"P.S.—It is of little consequence now; but why, my old friend, did you wish to pass with the young man by your wife's maiden name? It was one of your odd whims, I suspect. Poor fellow! it matters little now to him, whatever was your motive."

The letter contained other news, but Mr. Aston read no more.

Starting from his chair, he paced the room in a state of great agitation. Though he had not caused the accident, his conscience accused him. He had not given utterance to the words; but, more than once since he had suspected Henry Talbot, while his heart had yearned towards the orphan girl, his sister, he had thought that, if any accident were to befall her brother, his own difficulties would be removed—the trial he dreaded would be spared him. He had thought how then he would let his suspicions of Henry's dishonesty

sink into oblivion, and would avow himself Mary's uncle, and be to her a second father, for his own dear sister Mary's sake, and present her with a new brother and sister in his own son and daughter.

Now he bitterly blamed himself for having indulged such thoughts. All his love for the youth, whom he now believed to be beyond the reach of human judgment, of love or hatred, returned to him; and again it seemed possible that the suspicions he had entertained were without foundation. He would gladly have lost ten times the amount, could he have recalled the youth to life; and had he then stood before him and confessed his guilt, he would gladly have accorded him his forgiveness.

Then he wondered whether Mary had heard, by any means, of the sad fate of the Amazon, and he resolved to return forthwith to St. David, and visit her at her lodgings, where, if she had not heard the fatal news, she would be anxiously awaiting a letter from her brother, or perhaps, if the village letter-carrier had already been his round, would be wondering at, and sorrowing over Henry's silence.

Without waiting, therefore, to read the remainder of his letters, he thrust them in his pocket, and immediately returned to the village.

CHAPTER XXII.—IN WHICH MR. ASTON MAKES AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY.

THE letter-carrier of St. David had been his round, and had brought no letter to the farmhouse whereat Mary Talbot resided. It was late in the evening, and Mary was seated at the table in her own little parlour, wondering greatly at her brother's silence; sometimes blaming him in her heart for his carelessness; sometimes dreading lest some accident had occurred to prevent his writing.

"It is more than three months ago since he sailed," she thought to herself, "and he promised me faithfully that he would write me—though it were but a line—the very day on which he landed in America. Mr. Aston tells me that the voyage might have been made in four weeks, and would most likely not be more than five or six, and even were it six weeks, both ways, there has been more than time for me to receive a letter." Then she began to revolve the possibility of accident, and recalled what Mr. Sinclair had said, that sometimes, if vessels met with bad weather and suffered any damage, they put into one or other of the West India Islands to repair. "Perhaps," she continued, "that has been the case, and then Henry could not write. I will try to think it is so, and trust that the next packet will bring me a letter; but a month is a long time to wait in suspense. Poor dear Henry! I wish he had been content to remain in England."

These, and such thoughts as these, passed through Mary's mind; but though she strove to console herself, her pale face betrayed her serious anxiety.

Presently she rose, and, stepping to her writing-desk, brought forth the locket and chain her brother had given her for a keepsake.

"I told Henry I needed nothing to remind me of him when he was gone from me," she said, half aloud, as she resumed her seat; "yet, after all, I am glad that he gave me this, poor fellow. I only wish that his likeness was within it in place of the one that is there. Still, I am glad that I thought to clip a lock of his hair and place it inside."

She touched the spring, and the locket flew open and disclosed a lock of dark, curling hair, twined lovingly round the miniature within. She removed the hair,

pressed it fondly to her lips, and sat for some moments in deep dreamy reverie.

Presently she was startled from her reverie by the sound of a well-known voice in conversation with the mistress of the farmhouse.

"That is Mr. Aston's voice!" she exclaimed; "what can have brought him to the farmhouse at this late hour?"

Then she thought—

"Perhaps he brings news of Henry. He has been to Falmouth to-day. Perhaps he brings me a letter."

The joyous expectation restored the colour to her cheeks. The visitor was ascending the stairs towards her room, and with a beating heart she rose from her chair, sprang to the door, and, flinging it open, met Mr. Aston on the threshold.

"You bring me news of my brother?" she cried.

Then, bethinking herself of the trinket which lay upon the table, and ashamed lest Mr. Aston should witness her sisterly affection, and deem it foolish weakness, she turned back quickly to conceal the hair and remove the locket.

Mr. Aston, however, had already caught sight of the trinket, and had fancied that he recognised it.

"I have not exactly brought news from your brother, my dear Miss Talbot," he had commenced to reply to Mary's impulsive question, feeling keenly the painful difficulty of the task he had imposed upon himself, when his utter astonishment on perceiving the locket upon the table (his attention having been especially directed towards it by the young lady's sudden movement), and the still more painful suspicion which flashed to his mind, caused him for the moment to forget the purpose of his visit.

"Ha! what is this?" he exclaimed, advancing to the table before Mary could reach it, and taking up the locket. The flush of joyful anticipation that had risen to the young girl's cheeks deepened to a blush as she hesitatingly replied—

"It is a locket—a keepsake that Henry gave me on his last visit, a few days before he sailed."

Mr. Aston stood gazing into her face with a strange look, that surprised and somewhat frightened her.

The tone in which he had questioned her was different from his usual voice, and his manner seemed altogether so strange that, coupling with it the unseasonable hour of his visit (in fact, it was the first time that he had ever visited her at her lodgings), she began to fear that his intellect was affected, or, though she had never seen him in such a condition, that he had taken too much wine.

He, however, had turned his gaze from her, and was now occupied in closely scrutinising the locket and the miniature within it; and, forgetting her momentary alarm, in her anxiety about her brother, she repeated her question—

"Do you bring me news of Henry? I have been so anxious," she went on. "I knew that the packet had arrived, and, as I knew you had been to Falmouth, I thought, I hoped, that you had brought me a letter."

Mr. Aston's heart would have been filled with pity had he at that moment looked into her face, and seen the earnest, pleading expression of her eyes, and marked the anxious tone of her voice.

He, however, had misunderstood the quick movement to gain possession of the trinket, and the deep blush that had dyed her cheeks with crimson, and the marked hesitation in her reply to his question, and he suspected that her apparent anxiety was feigned, to withdraw his attention from her brother's keepsake.

Without raising his eyes, he replied, as she fancied, somewhat harshly—

"I said I had *not* heard any news from Henry;" and presently added, "So your brother gave you this?"

A mingled feeling of shame, vexation, and anger now took possession of her. She suspected that he fancied that the locket was a *gage d'amour*, and she felt that, even if it were so, there would have been no harm in her possession of such a pledge—though she would not willingly have shown it to him; and that, under any circumstances, his conduct was rude, and almost insulting.

"I have told you, sir, that it was given to me by my brother, as a keepsake," she replied.

"Hem!" ejaculated Mr. Aston. "It is a costly keepsake for a youth like Master Henry to have bestowed. I should have thought he had better have kept the little money he possessed for other purposes. Perhaps, though, he found himself unexpectedly in funds before he sailed?" and as he said this he looked again into the young girl's face.

Mary Talbot felt that this was unpardonably rude and insulting on the part of her visitor, who, though he had shown kindness both to herself and her brother, had no authority to question her relative to their own affairs, or to find fault with their expenditure; and her neck and brow, as well as her cheeks, now flushed—not with shame, but with anger—as she replied—

"I know not, sir, by what right you come here at this hour of the evening to question me about what only concerns Henry and myself. I confess that I needed no *souvenir* to remind me of my brother, and that I thought the gift a costly one. Henry, however, had his own reasons for presenting it to me; and, moreover, he did *not* leave England in such a penniless condition as you appear to imagine. He had more than two hundred pounds in his possession!"

"Two hundred pounds!" ejaculated Mr. Aston.

Mary fancied, from the manner in which he interrupted her speech, that he intended to impugn her veracity.

"I tell you, sir, my brother had two hundred pounds, and more, in his possession when he sailed from Southampton," she went on. "You seem to doubt me. I saw four Bank of England notes for fifty pounds each. My brother himself showed them to me, and these were unchanged when he embarked."

Mr. Aston stood for a moment silent and thoughtful, looking intently into the flushed face of the young governess. Then, as if he had made up his mind how to act, he placed the locket—which, during this brief colloquy, he had retained in his hand—on the table.

"Perhaps I have no right to question *you*, Miss Talbot," he said. "But I would recommend you to be very careful of your brother's gift. Keep it locked up, and don't expose it to *others* as you have done to *me*, or you may chance to lose it. That might be unpleasant." And with this, without even bidding the young lady good-night, he quitted the room and left the farmhouse.

"Can it be possible that she was an accomplice in the base, cruel act of plunder?" he asked himself, as he journeyed homeward, his thoughts so much occupied with what he had so unexpectedly seen and heard, that he had, for the time being, altogether forgotten the object with which he had hastened to the farmhouse immediately on his return from Falmouth. "How, otherwise, could he have accounted to her for the sudden possession of so much money?"

He was now perfectly convinced in his own mind that Henry Talbot had basely taken advantage of the sudden attack of illness with which he had been seized, to rob him of the money which he had expressly drawn

from his banker, and had that morning placed in his pocket-book as a parting gift to the young man himself. Whatever doubts he had hitherto had—whatever determinations he had made since he had heard of the loss of the Amazon, to banish his former doubts—all now passed from his mind. He felt as fully assured of Henry Talbot's guilt as he could have been had he witnessed the act of plunder.

Until now, amidst all his doubts and fears, he had held Mary blameless. An hour earlier he would not have believed it possible that she could be cognisant of the crime, and now he felt satisfied that she was, in one sense, as guilty as her brother.

"What meant the sudden movement from the door to regain possession of the trinket? What meant her evident shame and embarrassment, when, before she could regain it, I had seized it from the table? Why should she be ashamed of a *souvenir* presented to her by her only brother? And why, when driven to bay, did she so passionately stand on her brother's defence before I had accused him of wrong-doing? What could all this mean but that she is a party to the crime?"

These questions, and others of similar purport, Mr. Aston put to himself as he walked homeward; and he now believed that the brother and sister had arranged some plan to account for the possession of the money, in case suspicion should fall upon them. The hardihood in crime that such a course of proceeding implied, especially on Mary's part, shocked and terrified him. It appeared incredible that a young girl, so apparently pure and guileless as she, could be so base.

Then he asked himself what was the right course for him to pursue. He had no thought of exposing either the brother or sister. But was it right on his part to permit Mary to retain her present situation? Was it not his duty to acquaint Mr. Sinclair, who had implicit trust in her, that she was unworthy of that trust? And yet, by so doing, might he not drive her deeper into crime? Perhaps she herself abhorred the crime, yet sought to conceal her brother's guilt; and perhaps, after all—and this he earnestly hoped *was* the case—she believed some story that her brother had trumped up, and was herself really innocent.

If she had not evidently endeavoured to conceal the locket, he would have believed this; and still, Henry might have given her some reason for so doing. He might have told her not to let any one in the village see the keepsake he had given her. Did not she herself confess that she had thought it too costly a gift for one in her brother's position to bestow?

He tried to believe that this was the explanation of her evident trepidation of manner; and thus questioning himself, and mentally replying to his questions, he arrived at Cliff Cottage.

His mind was in a too perturbed condition to permit him to arrange his thoughts, or to decide upon any mode of action that night. The painful news he had heard in the morning; the anxiety he had suffered during his return home from Falmouth with the intention of breaking the sad intelligence to Mary, and then acknowledging his relationship to her, and endeavouring to comfort her in her bereavement; and the painful discovery he had so unexpectedly made on his visit to the farmhouse, which had for the time being driven all other thoughts out of his head, had altogether unnerved him; and as soon as he reached home he went to bed, in hope to find relief from his grief and anxiety in the forgetfulness of sleep.

And poor Mary. He had left her very unhappy. For some minutes after his abrupt departure, the

indignation she felt at his strange conduct overpowered all other feelings. Unless he had been indulging too freely in wine, she could not account for it; but she had never known him to indulge—never heard that he was in the habit of indulging in drink. In vain she sought to conceive any motive that he could have had for his unseasonable visit, unless he had come, as she had at first anticipated, to bring her some news of her brother; and yet he had gone away almost without referring to Henry, except in connection with the keepsake which had so completely absorbed his attention.

She felt annoyed—grievously hurt at his singular behaviour, but it was utterly unaccountable to her; and after a while the anxiety she felt respecting her brother, which Mr. Aston's visit had temporarily banished from her mind, returned with redoubled intensity. She could not help thinking that Mr. Aston knew something respecting Henry that he had not told her. She wondered, again and again, why her brother had not written to her, or whether the ship had been really delayed on her passage. She tried to hope that the latter was the case, and that the *next* mail packet would surely bring her the expected letter and relieve her of her doubts and fears.

At length she rose, and replaced the locket and chain and the precious lock of hair which it contained in the secret drawer of her writing-desk, where she had hitherto kept it; and, having read a chapter from her Bible, and knelt longer than usual at her devotions, and prayed earnestly for support, through whatever trials might be impending over her, she too sought rest.

Neither she nor Mr. Aston, however, found the forgetfulness they sought in sleep come readily to weigh their eyelids down. Painful thoughts long occupied the minds of each, and when slumber came at length, it came laden with troubled dreams, and morning dawned and found them little refreshed.

Some days elapsed before Mr. Aston and Mary Talbot met again. Mr. Aston then came to the schoolroom with the rector and Mr. Sharpe; but though he returned her salute, Mary could not help remarking that he sought to avoid her. His manner was evidently constrained; and yet at times—and this was still more painful and inexplicable to her—she caught his eyes turned towards her with an expression in which—as she fancied—aversion and compassion were singularly blended.

As is too frequently the case in this world, a misconception of the feelings they each entertained towards the other, was to both a source of annoyance, pain, and anxiety. A few words of explanation on either side would not only have sufficed to remove their mutual estrangement, but would have bound them together in the closest bonds of friendship and affection.

The words were not spoken, until one, at least, had endured much suffering which might well have been spared to her.

How often, among those whom we ourselves have known, has a misconception of feelings, or a misconstruction of motives, separated for years, and sometimes for life, persons and families, who, had they known each other's secret hearts, would have lived in the mutual interchange of the kindest feelings!

STREET TUMBLERS.

In most of the suburbs and outskirts of London, the street tumblers, athletes, acrobats, and performers of feats, both muscular and sleight-of-hand, make their

appearance soon after the spring showers, when warm weather is about setting in. They announce themselves, as Punch and Judy do, by banging a big drum with remarkable emphasis, and accompanying it with just a few bars of an improvised air on the Pandean pipes, intended to wake up the neighbourhood. The appeal is recognised far and wide, and is no sooner heard by that section of humanity who delight in gratuitous amusements, and are always on the look-out for “stray gifts to be seized by whoever shall find,” than they are surrounded by a flock of interested spectators, quite ready to appreciate their activity and skill. The performance invariably begins by the ceremonious spreading of a small remnant of stair-carpeting in the centre of the road or open space, an operation which takes up a great deal of time, and seems to be regarded, both by the operator and the lookers-on, as an important and mysterious affair. At the same time, another and far less ceremonious member of the company is engaged in clearing a ring, which he does by swinging a stout rope armed at either end with a heavy ball of brass, with which balls he makes play at the heads and toes of the crowd, and compels them to occupy the position assigned to them. What takes place when the carpet is duly spread and the ring is cleared, will of course depend upon the accomplishments of the members of the company, and their willingness to exhibit them in return for the encouragement they receive. The exhibition proceeds on the excelsior principle, beginning with small things, and going on with greater and still greater as the coppers pour in, until the grand climax of all is reached, and the performance is at an end. But you may note that, as a general rule, the climax never is reached, because the coppery shower never is profuse enough to meet the expectations of the performers, so that an abrupt conclusion is what usually takes place, and the sudden migration of the company to some other spot. Ill-natured spectators, especially those who contribute nothing, are apt to say that the grand climax is all a hoax—that the sword three-quarters of a yard long, which lies on the carpet ready to be swallowed when the coppers amount to three-and-nine, never is swallowed at all; or that the small donkey who waits there so quietly ready to go up the ladder, and be balanced on Signor Mokoni's hairy chin, never did go up the ladder in his life, and never will. We don't know anything about that, having ourselves never witnessed a completed performance, owing to the lamentable want of generosity on the part of the populace.

Meanwhile there is no denying that, climax or no climax, a good deal is done. The signor squats like a Turk, and lets fly a number of golden balls which he takes one after another from the pocket of his tinselled jacket, until his head is seen bobbing about beneath an ever-changing dome of the glittering globes, which, as fast as they fall into one open palm, are propelled to the other and sent circling again. Then the balls are changed for a set of gleaming bowie-knives, which are sent on the same rapid circuit, and whose shining points come in fearful proximity to the operator's temples. Then the signor folds his arms and takes breath a little, while a comrade goes through a series of peg-top manœuvres—spinning the top, whirling it in the air, catching it on his back, on his head, on the nape of his neck, on the sole of his shoe, or wherever else he chooses, and finally, ere it has ceased to spin, balancing it at the end of a long reed, upon his nose. Then you have gymnastics by a couple of youths who, joining hands and feet, roll round the circle so rapidly that one is not to be distinguished from the other; then they separate and turn no end of

somersaults, and walk and run and frolic indifferently on their heels or their heads, or embrace their own necks with their legs, while they hop about like fabulous birds upon the palms of their hands. When the signor has breathed awhile, he lies down on his back, turning the soles of his feet to the sky, and upon them is laid a long pole which he sends flying aloft and catches again as it comes down, keeping up the game to the tune of the big drum and pipes until you have had enough of it. Then the pole is flung off and one of the youths springs upon the upturned sole, where for a time he is pleasantly kicked from one foot to the other, rising higher and higher in the air at each succeeding kick, and finally performing a double somersault in his passage to terra firma. The signor now chooses to get up, but of course he does not do it as an ordinary mortal would; keeping his arms still folded, he prefers to pick himself up without the use of his hands, and he does it by sheer force of muscle. Then you shall see him planted firm on his feet, while a comrade as tall as himself leaps upon his shoulders, where he also stands erect and firm, while one of the youths swarms up the bodies of the two, and, standing on the shoulders of the second man, looks down from a height of some fifteen feet. Thus loaded, the signor walks about with a grand air to a martial tune, indulging his upper storey with a private view into the attics of the surrounding dwellings. After this, if the coppers are forthcoming, you may see some conjuring tricks; and, if you like to participate, you may even assist in their performance. You may have, for instance, a huge padlock taken out of your waistcoat pocket and firmly fastened in your jaw; or, objecting to that sort of dentistry, may see a quart of ale pumped from your elbow; or you may lend your handkerchief to the signor, who, unfolding it before your eyes, will show you that it contains half-a-dozen new-laid eggs. Various other tricks are performed, none of a very recondite kind, such as go to make the reputation of the far-famed wizards who astonish the world of fashion, but clever enough to startle and amuse the populace.

What is the origin of these amusing vagabonds? Where do they all come from when the season for their annual appearance sets in? How do they live? and where do they live in the winter? and what becomes of them when years steal upon them, and feats of activity and strength are out of the question? We shall endeavour to answer these questions *seriatim*. There is no question but that the most accomplished of these out-of-door professors have been trained to the business from infancy, and do but follow the vocation of their sires. This is shown to be the case by the extraordinary pliancy of limb and suppleness of joint which many of them possess and will retain up to middle age. They could never acquire the capability of twisting themselves into the shapes we sometimes see them assume, if they did not begin young, and they only learn it as children by constant and often very painful practice under the direction of their parents, or proprietors—by which latter term we mean to intimate the unpleasant fact that promising children are not unfrequently surrendered by their parents, for a consideration, to trainers who speculate upon making a profit out of them. On the other hand, there are numbers who take to this sort of industry—if industry it can be called—from a real liking to it; while there are also not a few who are driven to it by necessity. Of this last class are the poor street outcasts of London and other great cities, who begin by running and tumbling for halfpence after omnibuses, and end by joining, in the humblest capacity, some wandering

gang of street-strollers, with whom they work their way upwards as they best can.

To account for the appearance of the tumbling fraternity with the advent of summer, we need only revert to the necessities of their lot, which controls, and must control, the routine of their life. Performing their feats, as they are compelled to do, in garments too thin and light to afford them protection against rough weather, it would be madness in them to expose themselves to it, and therefore they never do if they can help it. They have a prudent fear of rheumatism, an attack of which would put an end to their occupation; and you may observe that after their performances they are always careful to cool themselves gradually, and will don cloaks or overcoats against the slightest shower of rain. Up to the time when we see them first in the streets they have been performing under cover—in barns, in dancing-booths, in public-houses, in travelling shows and circuses of small note, in penny theatres, and in migrating caravans, where their feats are of use in supplementing the attractions of a dried crocodile, a fat boy, or a calf with two heads. They take to the road in summer with the view of making a little more money than they can do in such engagements; and they gravitate towards London in the first instance, because the races, which come off at no great distance from London during the summer months, afford the most promising field for their exertions. On the racing downs they sometimes endure enormous labours and fatigue: they have been known to walk from London to Epsom in the early morning, starting before dawn—to be active throughout the whole day, with just an interval during the running of the horses, and at night to bivouac in an extemporised tent, or under the lee of some bank or sheltering wall—and to resume their avocations with unabated vigour on the following day; and so on until the carnival of the race-ground is over.

It is a prevailing notion that this class of men are intemperate and besotted, and spend their gains chiefly in drink. As a rule, nothing can be farther from the fact. A man who was given to drinking would speedily come to the end of his career as a gymnast or tumbler: he would lose firmness of muscle and strength of nerve; would drip with perspiration under exertions which the man in good training would make with perfect coolness; and in the end would be cast off by his comrades in their own self-defence. There are exceptional drunkards, of course, among them, who by strength of constitution last for years, but they come to grief and disgrace sooner or later. The expenses of a travelling company are not, judging from observations we have made, very enormous. There is generally a managing wife among them, who looks to the preparation of breakfast and supper at their quarters for the time being—the midday refreshment of the troop being taken as opportunity may serve. They do not appear to be at all choice, when on their travels, in the matter of lodgings. Some time back, while accompanying an inspector in his survey of a crowded lodging-house, we came upon a small room in which was a single bed; the occupants were a company of street tumblers, to the number of six; two lads occupied the bed, while the other four lay on the ground amidst their properties, all of them being fast locked in slumber, which our rather noisy intrusion failed to disturb.

When autumn comes on, heralding the approach of winter, these professionals begin to look out for some cover in which to hibernate; nor, in these days of popular amusements and recreations of all kinds, have they very far to seek. Many of them return to the

travelling shows, which find their harvest in the fall of the year by attending the mops and statute hirings, and the numerous fairs for the sale of farm produce of all kinds, which then come off. Many more contract engagements with publicans and the proprietors of music halls, where their performances alternate with those of the musical soloists and public singers. Numbers not so well qualified make their appearance on the stage of the "gaffs" and penny theatres in the low districts of the metropolis; while not a few get up independent exhibitions of their own in some poor neighbourhood—their stage being, perhaps, a room in the rear of a huckster's or marine-store-dealer's shop—where a dress-box ticket costs threepence, and pit and gallery are open at proportionate prices. Now and then the street performer gets a winter engagement at one of the London theatres, where he is generally taken on with the express condition that he accepts any kind of "business" it may suit the manager's convenience to assign to him. Hence it comes to pass that playgoers may see the Signor Mokoni blown into the air by the springing of a mine in a war spectacle—swinging by his legs from the sails of the mill in the "Miller and his Men," knocked about as an ancient "Charley" in a farce, or staggering about as decrepit pantaloon in a pantomime.

The most serious question of all, and the saddest to answer, comes last: What becomes of the tumbling professor in his old age? There are few prizes in this department of the lottery of life. The whole of the records of muscular greatness furnish very few Blondins and Leotards, and only one Belzoni: the million failures find no record, because no man cares about them. Old age, or what is tantamount to old age, steals upon the performing athlete much earlier than it does upon ordinary men, simply because an infirmity which would be no bar to the pursuit of ordinary avocations is often fatal to his. A touch of rheumatism, a liability to cramp, the straining of a muscle, the sprain of a sinew—any one of these may lay him on the shelf for a time, and if either should occur when he is past his prime, it is more than probable that he is laid by for ever. Men of this class are never willing to admit that their powers are failing, and often bring about the evil they fear by affecting to despise it. A man who should lie by to recruit, will go on violently exercising himself to avoid the suspicion of infirmity, which would be damaging to him; by-and-by his powers fail him of a sudden; he "misses his tip," as it is termed, that is, he trips or breaks down in performing the exploit which he is advertised for, and unless he can recover himself and perform it on the spot, it is all over with him—the beginning of the end of his career has come. Careful men take all possible pains to stave off this woeful crisis as long as they can: they drink sparingly—they diet themselves—they husband all their strength for the performance of the duties required of them, and resort to bathing, friction, poulticing their joints, and anointing themselves with "nine oils," and various other medicaments and devices for retaining the forces and elasticity of youth, which, last as long as they may, will desert them but all too soon. Many a man, after he is worn out himself, will retain a position in the company to which he is attached, on account of his child or *protégé*, whose clever performances bring money to the concern. In such a case he is seen no more in the arena, but is employed in some other way, as carter, stableman, bill-sticker, or general factotum, doing whatever is to be done for the common good. It is not an unusual thing for the street athlete, when his strength fails him, to turn peripatetic tradesman. If he have saved a little capital, and can

start a horse and cart, he does not make a bad figure as costermonger; and, as such, generally thrives. Wanting the means for such an outfit, he will push at a handcart, or carry about his stock on his head. His greatest enemies in either case are his nomadic habits and love of change, which are apt to interfere with his success, and reduce him to sad straits. Under the most disastrous circumstances, however, you never find him voluntarily resorting to "the house" as a refuge. All his habits and predilections are dead against that. If he is carried thither in his hour of distress and helplessness, it is in all probability to escape from durance by a speedy death.

That the life we have been describing must have special charms for those who follow it there can be no doubt, looking to their evident freedom from care and their customary good spirits, and to the fact that the march of science and the schoolmaster does not appear to diminish their numbers. What these charms are, however, one can hardly declare with certainty. It may be that certain temperaments find their fullest gratification in such a life; and that the admiration and popular applause that follow on success are an ever-present and agreeable stimulus, outweighing its inseparable hardships. Then we must remember there is a chance of a splendid reputation and enormous gains, which any youthful aspirant may hope to attain; and that this possibility, like a hundred-thousand-pound prize in a lottery where thousands venture, though but one can win, cannot fail of its attraction. On the moral bearings of the subject we need not here touch.

THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION OF INDIA.

BY REV. ROBERT HUNTER, M.A., LATE OF NAGPORE.

INDIA is in the main an agricultural country, and the great mass of its people are more or less directly engaged in the cultivation of the soil. "Happy peasants!" some one may be tempted to exclaim, "who draw from the unreluctant soil of fertile India abundance wherewith to satisfy their wants; who care not for politics, and never trouble themselves to inquire who rules in the imperial palace, or who ceases to rule, feeling that they are too obscure to be worth the notice of a tyrant, and that they may therefore pursue their tranquil course, whatever revolutions may rage in high places, much as the poetess describes:—

"Joyous birds, it hath still been so:
Through the halls of kings doth the tempest go,
But the huts of the hamlet lie still and deep,
And the hills o'er their quiet a vigil keep."

Happy peasants! who find life easy, who have to work for their sustenance at the utmost but a few hours each day, and who, when evening falls, take out their pastoral pipes and play simple melodies with vocal accompaniment, each wooing and winning some village maiden, and then living a happy life with her in a cottage, which he has erected on the most picturesque spot on his fields! Happy even in faith, as living far from the din of religious controversy and yet reaching the truth by a kind of simple instinct, which tells them that gratitude and love are due to the Author of their being, and the Preserver of their lives!" Yes; if all that were true, they would be happy peasants; but nearly every element in this pleasing picture is devoid of verity. Let us sketch the real life of the Indian agricultural population.

It is quite correct that they rarely trouble themselves to ask who their sovereign may happen to be, it being the exception rather than the rule for a traveller to meet

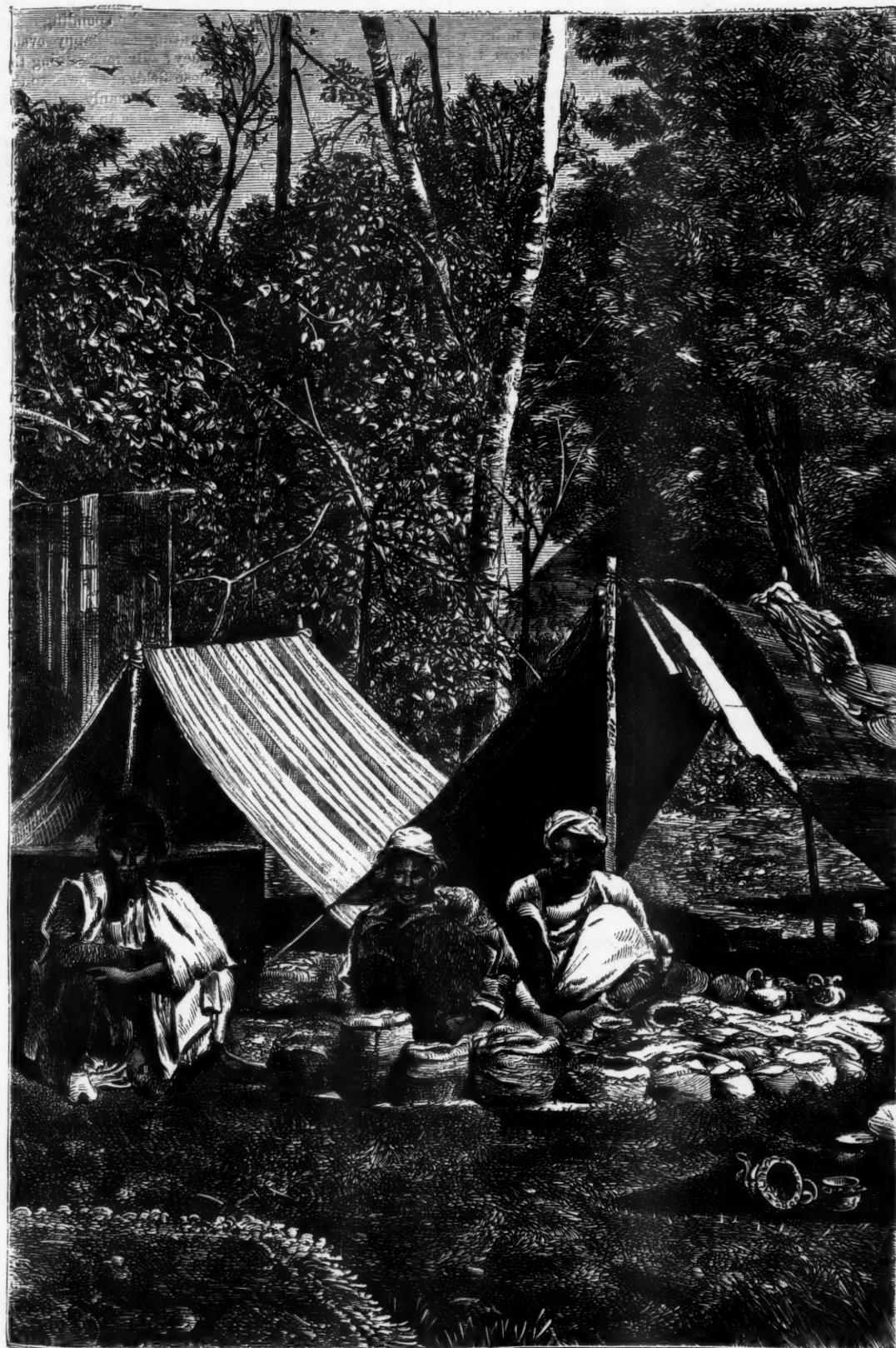
with an inquiring spirit who seeks information on such a matter; and when at any time one is encountered, it is difficult to repress a smile at the simplicity of the questions he puts. Rumour had whispered, even in somewhat remote parts, that this country and its great dependency were ruled over by a lady. It had also alleged that it was governed by a gentleman, and had even ventured to name him Koompanee, or, more fully, Koompanee Jehan—the Company John, or John Company. Here, then, was a perplexity which sorely afflicted the village student of Indian politics. If Jehan, or John, were really the ruler's name, how could it be alleged that India was governed by a lady? If, on the other hand, it was truly asserted that the sovereign was a lady, then what, pray, were the functions of the aforesaid John? Before the political changes consequent on the mutinies had displaced the East India Company from the close connection it so long had held with the administration of India, the difficulty now mentioned was stated to ourselves by an Indian peasant in his native dialect, in the hope that it might be within our power to furnish its solution, the precise question asked being, "Is Koompanee a man or a woman?"

But though the apathy of the Indian agriculturists may prevent their inquiring into the machinery of government, it is by no means correct that troubles in the upper regions of society pass by without affecting them: the very humblest peasant is really interested in the character of the sovereign power, whether he understands it or no. If the supreme ruler be too weak to inspire terror into evil doers, each of them will virtually become a monarch in the district where he happens to live, and not deem even the small peasantry beneath his dishonest attentions. Nor will it be simply property that will be brought into danger, it will be life. Before the British power was firmly established in Central India, and while the responsibility of keeping order there almost entirely devolved on native potentates more or less weak in character, and not often faithfully served, vast districts, not to say provinces, were annually overrun by troops of mounted robbers, called Pindarees, who everywhere swarmed like locusts, their numbers being estimated at from 20,000 to 25,000 horse, "of whom 6,000 or 7,000 were effective cavalry, about 3,000 or 4,000 middling, and the rest bad." When they had plundered districts under native rule, till they were not worth plundering any more, they then made some incursions into the British territory, in one of which, brief in point of duration, there were "killed by them 182; wounded, some severely, 505; and tortured (to make them give up their money), 3,633." "In many places the women, either to avoid pollution or unable to survive the disgrace, threw themselves into wells and perished." In one small town, "where the people, after a desperate defence, were overpowered by their assailants, they set fire to their own dwellings, and perished with their families in the flames."

So far, at least, as Central India is concerned—and we believe it the same throughout the vast Indian peninsula—the agriculturists have from time immemorial lived in villages, no one daring to occupy a house on his farm away from shelter. The writer of this article having travelled, generally on foot, for many hundred miles through Central and Western India, never once saw a farm-house. The arrangement adopted was this: villages were scattered over the country, generally at intervals of one or two miles apart. From these the agriculturists issued forth early in the morning, driving their flocks and herds before them to the fields. There they laboured for a great part of the day, and then

returned similarly attended in the evening. When a traveller approached a village towards sunset, he would see shepherds arriving with their sometimes numerous flocks of sheep and bullocks, trudging along to the general place of rendezvous, sometimes with bells which tinkled pleasantly suspended from their necks. When sheep and cattle were thus collected at the villages, they were safer from the attacks of tigers than if they had been left in the fields; while, if plunderers had appeared, the animals would have had the entire village community ready to rush to their assistance. While the strong arm of British power, under God, so effectively protected the Indian villages, they often forbore to bring home their flocks and herds; and such a scene as that in the vicinity of Bethlehem might easily have been witnessed—shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night under the open canopy of heaven. In most cases, if there were no one else in the fields, there was at least one person, a watcher, who, taking his station on an elevated erection, saw that no one came stealthily upon the ground to steal, or destroy the crops. Still, this in no way removed the impression produced by the want of farm-houses: the teaching conveyed by that significant fact remained unimpaired. It was unmistakably shown that no such confidence in the continuance of public tranquillity as that which encourages the British farmer to pitch his residence away from the support of his fellows had visited India when the village system was first organised; nay, that it had not fully visited it yet, else would that system have been changed. To render the more important villages defensible against such mounted robbers as the Pindarees, already described, they were in general fortified. We suspect that these arrangements also obtained in ancient Palestine. Hence, while we perpetually read of fenced cities, we do not read of farm-houses, even where we should expect them to be mentioned. Thus, while David spent a great part of his youth some distance out from Bethlehem, where his flock, not to say himself, was exposed to attacks from such animals as the lion and the bear, it is plain, from 1 Samuel xvi, that he and his father Jesse lived not in a farm-house, but within the walls of Bethlehem. Again, while the churlish Nabal sent out his flocks and herds to feed on the half-desert pastures, he sought his own safety within one of the neighbouring towns; and when the prophetic Gog wished to plunder some unprotected people, he did not bethink him of farmers living in detached houses, for such seem not to have existed; but he said: "I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land" (Ezekiel xxxviii, 11, 12.) In India the smaller villages are un-walled, as Gog was to find those of Canaan, while there is another resemblance between the two cases. Overpowering the inhabitants of the smaller villages, an invader would find a great booty in the assemblage of flocks and herds which had been driven at nightfall to seek such protection as the proximity of so small a number of human beings could afford.

All the more important Indian villages are provided with defences. Very generally they are surrounded by a wall, and have besides a small fort at one angle of the enclosure. In the Crimean war it fell upon our officers, with something of the novelty of a revelation, that earthworks, such as those that the Russians hastily



GRAIN SELLERS.

(From a Photograph.)

threw up before Sebastopol, were in many cases more, and not less formidable to a foe, than elaborately constructed stone fortifications. This secret in military science appears to have been known in India from the remotest period of antiquity, and the material used for the walls of the ordinary villages, and for their citadels, the small forts, is in general mud. In some cases brick is employed, and in others stone. We felt proud of our Government in the East, when, in the years preceding the mutinies, we saw one fort after another allowed to fall into decay. The most notable case of this kind left traces in the memory. There is a kind of fig-tree in the East, called the "peepul," which has a habit of sending its branches through small holes in walls, if it does not even make them for the purpose where they did not exist before. We have seen a flourishing branch thus present itself inside a gentleman's house, at the foot of his staircase, where he allowed it for a time to continue, on account of the interest attaching to the unwonted spectacle; but he dared not have permitted it to remain long, otherwise it would first have split his wall and then broken it down. In a town we once visited there was a brick fort, which must have cost a considerable sum of money to rear it; but a peepul tree had either found or made a hole in the wall, and poked through it a slender twig, which in due time had grown to be a great branch. Already it had cracked the wall in various directions, and, unless speedily removed, was on the same road towards flinging it over. On looking at the suggestive spectacle, we could not help reasoning in such a manner as this: The state of that wall shows the confidence the people of this town have in the ability of our Government to keep public tranquillity in the East. If the arm of British power were paralysed, it would not be long before it would be found requisite to cut down, or at least maim that destructive tree, and put the fort wall in a state to resist the attack of the new Pindarees who would soon swarm over the land.

In our fancy picture we spoke of each one wooing and winning a village maiden. In reality there is no wooing in the case. A boy and girl are betrothed to each other in early life, probably before they have ever spoken to each other, and while there is no possibility of knowing whether they will ever contract a love for each other or not. In due time betrothal is followed by marriage—marriage, which, in the whole of India, has a fatal tendency to lay the foundation for the financial ruin of at least one of the families connected with it. The reason is this: Most of the Hindoos are poor, and they are improvident. When the time for the marriage of a son or a daughter comes, it is found that no saving of money to meet the inevitable expenses has been made previously. Then fashion, which is more galling among the Hindoos than among ourselves, has prescribed that the marriage expenses shall be on a scale so disproportioned to the means possessed by either of the contracting parties, that they cannot be met without incurring debt almost hopeless in amount. If one had a salary of seven rupees a month (eighty-four rupees a year), custom prescribed that he should expend about one hundred rupees each time that a son of his was married. If a curate in this country, with a salary of £84 a year, and with six sons, were to find it impossible to give one of them in marriage unless £100 were spent on the occasion (chiefly in revelry), the absurdity would not be greater than what we daily see in India; and the agricultural population being very far behind, intellectually, never make the smallest effort to break the galling yoke. So, when some farmer's son

has to be married, the worthy father makes a point of acting in a manner befitting his rank, by spending more than a year's income in celebrating the happy event. But where does he get the money? By mortgaging the produce of his fields, ere yet these fields are sown, to the money-lender, who is not some gentlemanly individual from an Eastern Lombard Street, averse to pressing too far on a person in pecuniary distress, but a heartless screw, whose smallest demand is for 33 per cent. compound interest, and who quite as frequently makes it 66. When this is paid in farm produce, instead of in money, which, probably, is the case, the astute money-lender is found a faithful observer of that precept which teaches the propriety of buying in the cheapest market, with the view of selling in the dearest; and we would venture to allege that the grain-selling, represented in the wood-cut, will put no money into the pocket (so called) of Ramchundru Gopal, small farmer near the village of Bhoree. The proceeds of the sale will be paid over to Omichund, banker, money-lender, corn-factor, etc., etc., an enterprising individual, who first appeared in these parts from his native land, Marwar, in the north-west of India, carrying five rupees (equivalent to ten shillings sterling), tied up in the end of his scarf, and, commencing first as a money-changer, went on till he became banker, grain-merchant, and general speculator, with such funds at his command as to render him quite the Rothschild of the province in which he has taken up his abode. One great service which missionaries render to their Indian converts is to enact that expensive ceremony shall be discarded at all native Christian marriages, and that five or at most ten, instead of one hundred rupees, shall be the utmost extent of the charges incurred.

In the fancy picture, again, it was assumed that the simplicity of the villagers would lead them instinctively to the more obvious ideas underlying natural religion. Alas! experience dissipates this vain imagination. If the world by wisdom knew not God, and the highest intellect and knowledge ever possessed by the ancient sages were insufficient to enable them to reach true, however inadequate, conceptions of the Divinity; much less are the gross ignorance and the unawakened intellect of the Indian agricultural population fitted to bring them near to God. One of the commonest objects of worship among the villagers consists simply of the heaps of stones gathered from the fields, to render the latter fitter for agricultural operations. These stones are smeared with red lead, which is especially stuck on the projecting angles of the several stones. The aspect they then present is very much what would be exhibited if one were to stick pellets of red clay on the angular points of the stones heaped together at the corners of one of our own fields. They call that god Mhussoba, and, as might be expected, he is not a benevolent but a malevolent being, worshipped from fear and not from love.

Notwithstanding all, there is much to excite affection for the Indian cultivators. Though not intellectual naturally, and though what little understanding they have has been allowed to remain fallow—it being quite an exceptional case to find one of them able to read fluently—yet they are more loveable in some respects than the Brahmins, for they are more honest and trustworthy. Many of them, too, are hardworking men; and there are parts of Central India where, when the grain crops were in blade, far as the eye could reach we could see nothing but one continuous sheet of emerald green. At other parts there was a greater variety of hue. Thus, one noting the plants cultivated has to make such

entries as this in his journal—"Village of Assolee—near it were fields of wheat, pigeon pea and millet. Mahalgau—the fields onward from this village were of wheat, millet, and more rarely of pepper, sweet potatoes, etc. (By sweet potatoes is not meant a particular variety of our own potato, which belongs to the nightshade family of plants, but a kind of convolvulus whose tubers are eatable.) Waroda village—near this, plantations of plantains occur."

The intellectual state of the people resident in these villages may be inferred when it is stated that in the first of them, a place of about fifty houses, there was no school, and no person old or young could read; while in the second, of eighty houses, one was that of a rain-maker (!); and in the last, a small town of 300 houses, the rain-makers occupied three dwellings.

From these facts—and they might easily be multiplied a hundred fold—it is painfully apparent how much the Indian villagers require to be taught at least the rudiments of education, and, above all, how much they need to be instructed in the doctrines and precepts of our holy faith. In social matters, no reform is more urgent than one which shall reduce the crushing weight of marriage expenses, as now imposed by foolish and tyrannical custom, and emancipate the unhappy victims from the bondage in which they are held by the money-lenders: to whom they have mortgaged the produce of their lands.

The agricultural resources of India are so vast that, with proper management, it might not merely support its own population, but furnish in addition supplies of one kind of grain or other to feed a great portion of mankind. All that is needful to effect this desirable result is simply to provide some apparatus for utilising the water, which falls in torrents from the sky at certain seasons, and escapes away to the ocean without having been made to render man the service it might have been expected to furnish. Let India be properly irrigated, and we shall no longer have our feelings harrowed by reports of famines in that land. At the same time, let us not shut our eyes to the fact that the difficulties which have to be overcome are considerable. If our London Government ruled over all Europe, with the exception of Russia and Turkey, and if the vast population over which its authority extended were the reverse of public-spirited, so that, in every emergency their first thought was not of putting forth their individual exertions, but of asking the Government to lead the way in action, the position would in some respects be analogous to that we at present occupy in the East. One might be ready to say, the way to stop famines from occurring is easy. Construct upon the Thames a vast network of channels for transmitting water to the country through which the river passes, and build across it a very powerful embankment, to furnish such a fresh-water lake as may feed the channels. Do the same upon the Clyde and the Tay, and the Humber and the Severn, on the Seine, also, and on the Loire, and the Tagus and the Rhine and the Rhone. Let an identical system be pursued with the Po and the Tiber, with the Elbe also, and the Oder and the Vistula, as well as with the upper part of the Danube. Then may you laugh at famines, even if rain from heaven should in great measure be withheld. Very well, one might reply; but it is to be presumed that operations so extensive would cost a great many millions of money. A government which does not always find its ordinary expenditure met by its income, can only raise money by imposing new taxes, or by borrowing, both of which expedients it wishes if possible to avoid. Let its intentions be ever so beneficent, you must give it time to

carry them into effect. The opening of the Ganges canal some years ago was a proud triumph; while the hearty good will with which the Indian authorities have laboured for years on the lower portion of the Godavery, partly to render that river more navigable, partly to construct expensive works with the view of promoting irrigation, gives solid ground for believing that, if time be granted them, they will yet utilise to the fullest extent all the great Indian rivers, and ultimately succeed in preventing the recurrence of those famines which from time immemorial have desolated portions of the glorious Indian land.

M. ROUHER.

It is impossible to read the French political news in any daily or weekly journal without constantly meeting with the name of Monsieur Rouher, now one of the most prominent and influential statesmen in France.

The career of this minister of Napoleon III shows how success may often be ascribed to the unforeseen and trivial circumstances, from which no one would have anticipated any result. M. Rouher was first known, and then became celebrated, by an inadvertent expression which escaped his lips in the heat of debate, and to which, in cooler blood, he in vain tried to restore its real meaning. His descendants should, out of gratitude, inscribe the word "catastrophe" on their coat of arms, for it was this word which changed the unknown advocate, the most obscure member of a mediocre ministry, to his own surprise, into a great public celebrity.

Eugène Rouher, the Senator, Minister of State and of Finance, is now fifty-four years of age, and springs from a family, members of which for the last fifty years have held judicial offices. After finishing his studies at the college of his native town, Riom, he went to study law at Paris, became an advocate in 1837, and established himself as such in 1840 at Riom. The department of Puy de Dôme, or Auvergne, as that part of the country was formerly called, has always been very monarchical and conservative, although during the reign of Louis Philippe, the most violent opposition newspapers, supported by money from Paris, were published there. Consequently, actions against the press were quite the order of the day, and the Opposition, who were desirous of winning to their ranks the young and tolerably wealthy advocate, entrusted to him, directly after he had settled in the department, a large number of these cases to defend. As a barrister, he had not eloquence. He was not a ready speaker, was unacquainted with brilliant metaphors, and his variations on the word "liberty," then so much in fashion, showed the timid *dilettante*, rather than the skilled professor, in these press prosecutions.

However, he was thoroughly successful. These trials brought his real judicial knowledge to light. He earned a great deal of money; and, in the year 1848, he married the daughter of the Mayor of Clermont, the chief town of the province, and through this marriage became a considerable landowner. Then he completely broke the loose bands which tied him to the liberal party; and in 1846 boldly came forward as government candidate, at the elections for the Chamber of Deputies, under the patronage of the minister, M. Guizot. But the bitter feeling against one who was considered to be a renegade was so great, that even many conservatives voted against him, and he obtained only a few thousand votes.

Under the Republic, with universal suffrage, he was

more fortunate : 42,000 electors named him as deputy to the Constituent Assembly ; and when this body had finished its labours, during which M. Rouher always voted with the Right, 52,000 voters sent him to the Legislative Assembly.

The deputy of the department of the Loire, Citizen Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, had once heard his young colleague, Rouher, speak in the Constituent Assembly, and when asked his opinion on the talents of the speaker, he replied, shaking his head : " It seems to me as if this citizen did not possess the capability of rightly expressing his own thoughts."

No one understood this oracular sentence : they turned away with a shrug from the deputy with the languid countenance, weary eyes, and world-renowned name. Six months after M. Rouher was Minister of Justice. He had never exchanged a word with the then President of the Republic, and was utterly astonished when the President of the Council of Ministers, M. Ferdinand Barrot, informed him that it was the express wish of the first magistrate of the Republic that he should accept a portfolio. Till 1851 he remained under several ministries at the head of the department of Justice.

It was at this period that he let fall that celebrated word, to which we have before alluded, and which made Rouher known from one end of France to the other. On the morning before one of those important sittings, which during the second Republic often became so stormy, Louis Napoleon said to Rouher—

" They wish again to try to extinguish you with the glorious Revolution of the 24th February, 1848. The people really believe that they were all Mirabeaus or Dantons ! We must for once hold a mirror up before them, in which they may be able to see a faithful likeness of themselves in all their littleness ! "

Rouher, meditating on these words of the President, went to the Assembly, and it so happened that immediately after his entrance he had to ascend the Tribune to answer an interpellation as Minister of Justice.

" Be cautious—the chamber is very much excited to-day !" his colleague Baroche said to him.

" Certainly, certainly," he replied, rather absently, ascended the Tribune, and replied in a few impetuous words to the interpellation. The murmurs of the Assembly excited him still more ; and when at last he heard the cry from the Left, " That was just what was said before the 24th February," his presence of mind completely forsook him, and, still under the impression which the words of the President of the Republic had made on him, he raised himself up to his full height and exclaimed with a voice of thunder—

" Your boasted Revolution was nothing more than a catastrophe ! "

Only those who have been present at a French National Assembly can have the faintest idea of what now happened. Clapping, shrieking, hissing, threats and insults, followed without end ! The tumult lasted for more than half-an-hour, and M. Rouher, who had retired to the ministers' bench, might well have feared for some minutes that his person was not secure from violent treatment.

In vain he explained, after quiet had in some measure been restored, that he had used the word " catastrophe" only in the sense of an unforeseen event. It was of no avail : amidst universal hissing " l'homme à la catastrophe" was again forced to leave the tribune.

Foreigners cannot understand the deep impression which such scenes make on the public in France. This innocent word flew like wildfire through the land, and became a sort of test by which some showed their hatred

to the Republic, and others the most unbridled fury against the Government. And the man who had provoked this " catastrophe" in such an innocent manner, could scarcely believe his senses when he contemplated this terrible ferment ; but he had an opportunity thereby, such as had never before been presented to him, of studying his countrymen. But he had not much time for this : a vote of want of confidence, a few weeks after, caused the fall of the entire ministry and led to the *coup d'état*. Rouher remained in the chamber as a simple deputy, who could no longer speak, as the Left would not allow him to say a word, and always brought up afresh the recollection of the " catastrophe." At the consultations which preceded the execution of the *coup d'état* at the Elysée, M. de Morny proposed the deputy Rouher as a minister. A dry " No" was the reply of the President, who gave as his reason the following words, which well characterised M. Rouher : " C'est l'homme des demi-mesures ! "

The new order of things was, however, scarcely established, when the President, now unrestricted in his authority, offered M. Rouher a portfolio, which he accepted ; but a few weeks after he retired, together with M. de Morny, as they refused to countersign the decree which confiscated a portion of the property of the Orleans family. How greatly this much-talked-of decree confused the minds of the most faithful and devoted adherents of Napoleon III is proved from the simple fact that Morny, Napoleon's own brother, refused to sign it as minister. Time has cooled down this excitement, and it has been argued also that the word " confiscation" was falsely applied, as three courts of law confirmed that this property did not belong to the Orleans family, but to the State.

Napoleon gave the retiring minister the vice-presidency of the newly-created Council of State, and till 1855 he was almost forgotten, when the Emperor again called him into the ministry, and gave him the portfolio of Agriculture, Trade, and Public Works. Since that time to the present M. Rouher has never left the ministry ; and in these twelve years has at different times presided over all the branches of the Government in France, with the exception of War and Marine.

The reader will remember that, after the Italian war, the Emperor, in the year 1859, thought the time had arrived in which a more liberal direction might be given to the Constitution. One of the chief measures taken in this sense was to appoint a minister, whose duty it should be to defend the Government in the chambers. Billault was the first who held this difficult post ; and after his death, in 1862, Rouher became his successor.

It was the general opinion that the Emperor had made a mistake in this appointment, as it was well remembered that Rouher's oratorical talents had not shone in the chambers of the Republic, and his " catastrophe" speech was again brought up to the remembrance of the French nation. To succeed Billault, one of the best and most talented orators of France, was not an enviable inheritance for any man. But after his first speeches all saw how greatly they had been deceived. Often has M. Rouher, during the last five years, gained the victory over all opponents. Clever, undoubtedly, as a politician, we must not forget that, as a minister of Napoleon III, his opinions, whatever they may be, have to give way to those of his imperial master, whose will is supreme. Rouher, like all the other ministers, is only the executor of the Imperial will ; but, as he is the only one in the whole Cabinet whose gift of eloquence can be employed with advantage in the chamber, a much more important

place in the councils of the sovereign is assigned to him than to any of his colleagues.

In general, the sketch of those official speeches of which we have been speaking is drawn out for him by the Emperor's own hand. He works out the ideas, and then reads the whole to the Emperor; which, after it has been corrected, is communicated to the rest of the ministry. The morning before the sitting Rouher has another audience, when, often at the last moment, not unimportant changes are made. The really marvellous memory of Rouher has grown with all this exercise of mind.

Rouher, in a word, is just the man whom Napoleon III requires—without ambition, without independence, and wonderfully endowed with talents and tact. To have discovered him out of the mass of parliamentary mediocrities, and to have made him pliable to his absolute and inflexible will, is the merit of the Emperor alone.

We must add to this sketch that the private life of Rouher, as well as his personal honour, have never in the remotest degree been subjected to the criticisms of the enemies of the empire.—*From Daheim.*

"OLD WEDGWOOD" WARE.

THE publication of interesting and profusely illustrated biographies of Josiah Wedgwood, by Miss Meteyard and Mr. Jewitt, has given an extraordinary impetus to the collection of the works of that remarkable man. The demand for the earlier productions of the manufactory at Etruria has sharpened the wits of dealers, both honourable and unscrupulous; and as the latter form, alas! an overwhelming majority, a few hints for the guidance and protection of ingenuous and unwary collectors may not be unacceptable.

In the first place, then, it is a duty which every collector owes to himself, to distrust, *prima facie*, dealers in articles of *virtù*, rare pottery included. This apparently uncharitable dictum is justified by the fact that there is nothing of this kind which perverted ingenuity will not essay to imitate and traffic in, from a Raphael to a scarabaeus. It is perfectly notorious to collectors that counterfeit antique furniture, Roman, Greek, and early English coins, Etruscan vases, bronzes of the classic period, implements of the primeval ages, old Sèvres and Dresden china, and other varieties of pottery, aboriginal weapons, mediaeval seals and manuscripts—in fact, everything commanding the fictitious prices paid by collectors, are manufactured on a large scale. The publication of the names and addresses of the people who follow this disreputable calling would be a public duty, were it possible to be sure that the dealers have not sometimes been themselves the dupes of the manufacturers of these wares.

Let it be stated, however, at once, that, in the writer's opinion, the successors of Josiah Wedgwood are quite incapable of knowingly lending themselves to such traffic. Nevertheless, their works, and those of John Adams and Co., of Hanley, who are equally entitled to the benefit of the saving clause, are periodically visited by professed dealers in "Old Wedgwood," and the articles there purchased are afterwards palmed off upon the uninitiated for the almost priceless productions of the Wedgwood and Bentley period. These dealers—mostly Jews—buy up job lots of ware, which they at once offer unblushingly, and at fabulous prices, as "the genuine article," or else attempt to "doctor" it into a resemblance of the old ware, by a variety of processes little known beyond the craft. For instance, some few years since the

writer went into a pretentious-looking shop in the Strand, and requested to be allowed to examine a pair of jasper flower-pots. The moment he took them into his hand, he knew by a raspy "feel," peculiar to new biscuit pottery, that in all probability they had been in the oven within six months from that time. The assistant volunteered the information, "You have the genuine article there, sir;" and the price demanded was eight guineas. They might have been purchased at Etruria for ten or twelve shillings. Various devices are resorted to to remove this tell-tale asperity of surface; and it is not long since that two Jew dealers, having quarrelled, one of the fraternity disclosed that his rival was in the practice of immersing new goods in a butt of stagnant soft water, trusting to the viscosity of the bath to give them that exquisite smoothness of surface which is one of the most marked characteristics of "Old Wedgwood," but which time alone can impart in perfection.

The greatest windfall for dealers in "Old Wedgwood" happened in this wise. Contemporary with Josiah Wedgwood there lived at Hanley one Elijah Mayer, a persevering and fairly successful copyist of the great master. Much of his ware, in the black basaltes and cane-coloured bodies, was highly meritorious. Elijah Mayer was succeeded by his son Joseph Mayer, an eccentric old gentleman, who died about seven years since worth a round quarter of a million of money. At his death, his executors came into possession of a large quantity of choice pottery, the earlier productions of the house, on which lay undisturbed the dust of half a century; for, although Mr. Mayer had been out of business many years, the remnant of his stock had never been sold. A considerable proportion of this ware was made after original Wedgwood models, of which, however, it fell far short. Scenting their prey from afar, the London dealers in "antiques" swooped down upon this accumulation and bought it up by cratesful. They then removed it to London, and cautiously introduced it into their shops and windows as "Old Wedgwood," frequently obtaining from the inexperienced, for the better specimens, more pounds than they had cost shillings. Many pieces of this ware are stamped "E. Mayer," and this appears to have been a source of perplexity to some of the dealers; but there was one, at least, who found a way to surmount the difficulty, for he told a friend of the writer that this stamp was the name of Wedgwood's designer or manager, and was merely a private mark for the facilitation of business.

One more illustration of the "tricks of trade." Some time since, the art director of one of the leading firms in the Potteries obtained a spoil copy of a group of figures in parian, for the purpose of making some experiments in colour. The experiments were made, and the group was put aside as worthless; but, before it had been consigned to the "shord-ruck," it caught the eye of a Jew dealer, who either begged it or bought it for an old song. Bringing it up to London, he submitted it to the inspection of a distinguished—one might say illustrious—statesman, who lightens the toils of office, and beguiles the hours of retirement, by indulging in the gentle passion for rare specimens of the potter's art. The dealer represented the group to be a remarkably scarce and valuable piece of Italian pottery of the *cinquecento* period: a fabulous sum was paid for it: rumour says £50. The fortunate possessor, unwilling that such a treasure should be wholly lost to the public, sent it to South Kensington, whence, however, it was ere long ignominiously expelled on being accidentally seen and identified by the modeller.

Lastly, let not the collector of "Old Wedgwood" be beguiled into the purchase of anything which does not bear the impress of that honoured name, nor let him suppose that because an object is so impressed, it was necessarily produced under Wedgwood's personal superintendence, for the chances will be fifty to one that it was not. Nor, again, let him conclude that the presence of the much-desiderated "Wedgwood and Bentley" stamp is an infallible sign of genuineness, for it has happened before now that modern bodies have been attached to old plinths. But let him, if the opportunity present itself of possessing any of these charming relics, and he has not confidence in his own judgment, consult some experienced connoisseur, preferring the risk of being out-bidden to the mortification of burning his own fingers.

JAPANESE POETRY.

Few people have any idea of what Japanese poetry is, or have even thought that there may be poets in that distant quarter of the world. But we have before us a volume of extracts, pretty stanzas, the production not of one poet, but culled from a hundred. The title might run thus: "A Verse from each of the Hundred Poets;" but the original title in literal English is more quaint. It is "One Head (or chapter, verse, stanza) of the Hundred Men;" and these hundred men are emperors, empresses, tycoons, learned monks, warriors, ladies, and others, all of the noble class, whose poetic effusions are collected into a little household book.

Everybody in Japan knows these verses. They have been handed down from father to son for hundreds of years. They are familiar in every household. Some learn to know them by hearing others repeat them, and others by studying the ancient language in which they are written. Japanese is of so flexible a nature that there is no difficulty in forming beautiful epithets for their sacred mountains, or streams, or woods and dells, when they wish to embody their thoughts in verse.

The first verse reminds us of that illustrious Irish cabin, which was open to the sky, where one of our own heroes first saw the day. The Emperor Tengee, which means "heavenly wisdom"—(all Oriental names are significant)—describes somebody's experience of autumnal dew, thus:—

My lowly hut is thatched with straw
From fields where rice-sheaves frequent stand.
Now, autumn's harvest well-nigh o'er,
Collected by my toiling hand,
Through tatter'd roof the sky I view,
My clothes are wet with falling dew.*

A certain supervisor of shipping coming from China to Japan gets wealth, and this excites envy, whereupon he is banished to the "eighty islands," whence he sends this verse to his friend:—

Ye fishermen, who range the sea
In many a bark, I pray ye tell
My fellow-villagers of me—
How that far o'er vast ocean's swell,
In vessel frail
Towards Yasoshima I sail.

The emperor afterwards discovers his innocence, and restores him to his former rank.

The Japanese greatly admire the maple, as its leaves turn red in autumn, and in many of these verses it is mentioned:—

* Those metrical translations are from "Japanese Odes," by F. V. Dickins, M.A., Smith, Elder, and Co., London.

For 'mid the hills the momiji
Is trampled down 'neath hoof of deer,
Whose plaintive cries continually
Are heard both far and near;
My shivering frame
Now autumn's piercing chills doth blame.

The redd'ning leaves of th' momiji
That on Ogura's summit grow,
How pleasant 'tis their tints to see!
Ah! did they but their beauty know,
They would linger till there pass'd again
Our Emperor's miyuki* train.

On the seventh night of the seventh month, which is a festival among the Japanese, ravens are supposed to fly towards two particular stars in the milky way, and the appearance they present in dense flocks as they sail along is said to resemble a bridge. In the royal park there is also a bridge called the "Raven Bridge." The poet puts these two ideas together in the following stanza, which has probably suffered in translation:—

Upon the bridge where ravens, aye,
Do love to pass where hoar-frost's sheen,
When hoar-frost's glittering film is seen;
I trow the break of day is nigh.

In the twelfth ode we have a beautiful figure used. The Goddess Otome, said by the poet to be borne along in the clouds, is taken for the dancing girl at the festival, where he catches but a glimpse of her as she moves rapidly in the throng:—

In fitful path across the sky,
By various winds of heaven forced,
Cloud-borne Otome glideth by—
Now hath the breeze its vigour lost
An instant, and her form so bright
For a fleeting moment greets my sight.

The Japanese poet views the moon much in the same spirit as we of the western world do, as the following verses by different authors testify:—

How oft my glance upon the moon hath dwelt,
Her secret power my soul subdued—
Her sadd'ning influence I alone have felt,
Though all men autumn's moon have viewed.

On every side the vaulted sky
I view: now will the moon have peered,
I trow, above Mikasa high
In Kasuga's far-off land upreared.

The Ariake-moonbeams will
In th' morning heaven linger still;
While I from thee—how hard the smart—
By Akadski compelled, must part.

A famous soldier in the wars with Corea, who penned the following lines, must have possessed the true poetic spirit. He refers to the blossoms of the *sakura* tree, which wither about the end of the spring.

'Tis a pleasant day of merry spring,
No bitter frosts are threatening,
No storm-winds blow, no rain-clouds low'r,
The sun shines bright on high,
Yet thou, poor trembling little flow'r,
Dost fade away and die.

The autumnal gale, and the dew-drops and withered leaves dispersed by it are noticed here:—

Now dew-drops sparkling o'er the moor are seen,
The autumn gust sweeps howling by,
Scarce lurks an instant 'mid the reeds I ween:
In timid show'r the dew-drops fly,
And scattered o'er the grass, there lie.

Now autumn's gales, in various freak,
On herb, on tree, destruction wreak,
And wildest roar
The gusts that down from Mube pour.

The winds of autumn have amassed
Dried withered leaves in ruddy heaps,
Have them in th' mountain-torrent cast,
Whose stream in stony channel sweeps;
Amid the rocks that bar the way
The mom'ji's reddened leaves delay.

* A *miyuki* means a royal progress.

+ *Ariake* means the moon shining all night. *Akadski* means the dawn.

The poet here refers to the wild mountain districts of Shigayama.

The following verse is by the son of an emperor, who had become a recluse, and who lived in a hut by a pass in the mountains. Having seen the vanity of the world, on becoming blind he turns poet, and here praises the expression *ausaka* gate, which is the barrier where all meet and all pass by; *ausaka* meaning "place of meeting."

Some hence towards the city hastes,
Some from the city here speed by,
Here friends and strangers meet and part,
With kindly glance and careless eye;
Apt is the name it seems to me,
Ausaka gate, men give to thee.

The tender passion is frequently referred to in Japanese stanzas, and in the following ode the course of love is compared to the fishers' barks with their rudders lost:—

The fishers' barks in safety glide
O'er th' broad expanse of Yura's bay;
Their rudder lost, o'er Yura's tide
In vague uncertain path they stray:
The course of love doth, too,
A like uncertain path pursue.

In another verse the flames of love are ludicrously compared to the writhing of the flesh under the *moxa*, a process much used by the Japanese for cauterising.

To tell thee of my love were vain,
Its depth to me is scarcely known:
As writhes the flesh 'neath moxa's pain,
The moxa on Ibuki grown,
So madly writhes my spirit 'mong
Love's flames, ere now unknown, sore wrung.

In the eighty-ninth ode the poet looks upon the "secret" of her love being known as the most dire calamity, and wishes that the thread of her life might snap ere this should happen. It is by a princess-poet—

Of my life or soon or late the thread,
The withering thread, perforce must snap:
I almost would 'twere now; I dread,
(Of longer life the certain hap),
The secret of our love displayed,
And all our happiness low laid.

The following would do for the lovers of Izaak Walton's "gentle art":—

O that throughout an endless life
I might in peace dwell, far from strife!
For ever watch the fishing yawl,
And view the net's abundant haul:
How fair to me,
How pleasant such a lot would be!

The vast extent of the ocean is neatly expressed in this ode—

In fisher's bark I onward glide
O'er th' broad expanse of ocean's tide,
And towards th' horizon when I turn
My glance I scarcely can discern
Where the white-tipped billows end,
That with the cloud-horizon blend.

Most of these stanzas contain common and simple ideas, with little depth of thought or fertility of invention. Their chief novelty or interest lies in the allusions to national customs or local scenery. Whatever varieties appear in the poetry and legends of different nations and races, human nature is one and invariable all the world over. Strange diversities are found in the outside of this and the other people, but the inside of man has as much sameness in the mental and moral as in the physical being. The joys and sorrows, the passions and feelings, the appetites and aims, are wonderfully alike in England and in Japan.

Varieties.

APRIL.—April is a month of proverbial fickleness. Sunshine and shower so quickly chase each other in and out of rainbows, that the weather might form a fresh subject for remark every hour. It is all variable and inconstant; so that Shakespeare aptly compares the spring of love to "the uncertain glory of an April day." Tennyson dethrones April from its first place as a noun, and uses it much as he uses the word "Eden" when speaking of the nightingale's song as ringing "Eden through the budded quicks;" for, when he tells of the bride about to leave her old familiar home for the new untried one, he beautifully says, that the doubts and soft regrets that come "Make April of her tender eyes." A like idea had occurred to Shakespeare; for, when Octavia is parting from her brother Caesar, her husband, Antony, says—

"The April's in her eyes; it is love's Spring,
And these the showers to bring it on."

The variable character of April is also expressed by Tennyson, in "The Vision of Sin," where, again using the word as an adjective, he says:—

"Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance."

It was Rosalind who pertly said, "Men are April when they woo, December when they wed." But if April is a watery month, we may call to mind for our comfort the old proverb that says, "April showers bring forth May flowers."

INTERNATIONAL LAW.—States or bodies politic are to be considered as moral persons, having a public will, capable and free to do right and wrong, inasmuch as they are collections of individuals, each of whom carries into the service of the community the same binding law of morality and religion which ought to control his conduct in private life. The law of nations consists of general principles of right and justice equally suited to the government of individuals in a state of natural equality, and to the relations and conduct of nations, and of a code of conventional or positive laws. In the absence of these latter regulations, the intercourse and conduct of nations are to be governed by principles fairly to be deduced from the rights and duties of nations and the nature of moral obligation; and we have the authority of lawyers of antiquity, and some of the first masters in the modern school of public law, for placing the moral obligation of nations and of individuals on similar grounds, and for considering individual and *national* morality as parts of one and the same science.—Chancellor Kent.

AMERICAN COINS.—At a recent sale in New York of silver coins of the United States, a quarter dollar of 1823, very rare, there having been not more than a score, probably, ever put into circulation, sold for 47dols. 50c. A dime of 1842, very fine impression, brought 25dols. Of the half-dimes, that of 1794 brought 10dols., and others from that date to 1801 brought from 3dols. 25c. to 3dols. 60c. each. The half-dime of 1802, which is said to be more rare than any other coin in the American silver series, there being but three specimens known, was bought for 45dols. Large prices were paid for other coins, of which the largest was for the silver dollar of 1804, which was purchased for 750dols.

INFANT PRAYER.—The following communication, addressed to the Editor of the "Sunday at Home," treats of matters artistic rather than devotional, and may therefore find more fitting place in the "Leisure Hour":—"I was pleased to see, in the 'Sunday at Home' for February, a wood-cut copy of the engraving of 'Infant Prayer.' It may, probably, add to the interest in this picture, to mention that the two children therein represented are portraits. The original, by J. Sant, R.A., was exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1856; its number in the catalogue was 67, and its title, 'The Lady Edith Campbell and the Lord George Campbell, children of his Grace the Duke of Argyll.' I may here quote the criticism of the 'Art Journal' (p. 163) on this picture: 'The two children are grouped as at prayers, and wearing their night-dresses, with an expression of feeling eloquently devotional. The treatment is very simple: the light group tells against the dark background. The picture is absolutely delicious; the children are exceedingly beautiful; they belong to Nature as much as to the Duke.' Their mother inherited her queene beauty from her mother the Duchess (Dowager) of Sutherland. The engraving from the picture entitled 'Prayer,' was from the *burin* of Henry Cousins, and was published by Messrs. Graves, October 24th, 1857. A fine early impression hangs before me as I write this;

it is undoubtedly one of the best specimens of the effective 'mixed' style of engraving that have been produced, even by Mr. Cousins. In the engraving (but omitted in the wood-cut) a child's crib is indistinctly seen behind the two figures, the head of the crib being ornamented by two carved heads of cherubs. This fanciful method of treating children's portraits, as shown in this picture, is usually adopted by Mr. Sant, and with the greatest success. In the naturalness, grace, and high-bred style that he imparts to his figures of children, he rivals Reynolds and Lawrence at their best. The excellent coloured print of 'Red Riding Hood'—also said to be a portrait—issued by the proprietors of the 'Illustrated London News,' has carried a favourable specimen of his talent in child-portraiture into thousands of homes in all parts of the world; and your wood-cut of 'Infant Prayer' will be, to as many thousands, a still further proof of this artist's skill in treating his pictures of the children of the nobility, in a manner to secure for them a wide popularity among all classes. In the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1855, Mr. Sant exhibited a very pleasing picture of two children, a boy and girl, busily engaged in feeding a bird, only the shadow of which is seen in the painting. These were portraits of the Lord Almeric Athelstane Spencer Churchill, and the Lady Clementine Spencer Churchill, children of the Duchess of Marlborough. In the picture gallery at Blenheim is another child-portrait picture by Sant, representing a little boy kneeling on one knee, and playing the lover to a very demure-looking little maiden, seated on a garden-bank, both being dressed in the quaintest fashion of the past century. Under the title of 'The Inexorable,' this picture was exhibited at the British Institution, 1849. Since that date there was another picture by the same artist, where the little girl was being pushed along in a sledge by the boy lover. Mr. Sant appears to scorn the conventional in portraiture-painting, and, that he does so with the greatest success, the charming picture of 'Infant Prayer' is a proof."—*Cuthbert Bede.*

EXPERIMENTS WITH POTATOES.—A correspondent writes from Saltash, giving the results of his experience for comparison with the statements which appeared on this subject in the "Leisure Hour" for October:—"I quite approve of changing the seed frequently, and prefer the new ashleaf for garden culture to any other, both as to quantity and quality. I pick out moderate-sized well-shaped potatoes for seed in October, then place them in single layers on dry shelves, with their eyes uppermost, exposed to the light, which no doubt tends to draw off the excess of moisture, and they shoot out green sprouts by March two or three inches long. The first or second week in March I dibble them into a well-prepared piece of ground—sand or soot tends to pulverize the soil—and for early planting I prefer half a load of stable dung, and three pounds of Peruvian guano to be well mixed with the soil; if the ground is wet and heavy it will be better to defer planting until it is in proper condition. I consider earthing up the potatoes at the commencement of the season very useful, as it protects the haulms from the frost; and in the month of July, when it is most luxuriant in its growth, it acts as a gutter or filter to carry off any excess of rain that may fall in a wet season, besides making a current of air to pass between the rows, which causes it to evaporate and dry off much quicker than it would on an even surface; of course the rows ought to be planted up and down the declivity of a garden or field, and not across it, as is too commonly the case. I imagine the disease is mainly caused by slugs, and other insects, eating the rind of the haulm, which prevents the sap returning to nourish the potatoes as quickly as it otherwise would. On first noticing the disease in the leaf, I have tried the plan of partially cutting the haulm; also of cutting them down an inch below the surface; likewise pulling them up from the tubers. I prefer the second course, but would advise some slaked lime being strewed over the rows, in the evening, to destroy the slugs, and then earth up the rows to a sharp point. The potatoes afterwards ripen nicely, and are very mealy and excellent in quality; but they do not attain their full size, being nearly a third deficient."

LONDON HOUSES.—London bricks are reduced to dry clay again in the course of sixty years, or sooner. Bricks, burn them rightly, build them faithfully, with mortar faithfully tempered, they will stand, I believe, barring earthquakes and cannons, for 6,000 years if you like! Etruscan pottery (*baked clay*, but rightly baked), is some 3,000 years of age, and still fresh as an infant. Nothing I know of is more lasting than a well-made brick. We have them here, at the head of this garden (wall once of a manor park), which are in their third or fourth century (Henry VIII's time, I was told), and still per-

fect in every particular. Truly the state of London houses and London house-building, at this time, who shall express how detestable it is, how frightful! For there lies in it not the physical mischief only, but the moral too, which is far more. I have often sadly thought of this. That a fresh human soul should be born in such a place; born in the midst of a concrete mendacity; taught at every moment not to abhor a lie, but to think a lie all proper, the fixed custom and general law of man, and to twine its young affections round that sort of thing! England needs to be rebuilt once every seventy years. Build it once *rightly*; the expense will be, say, fifty per cent. more; but it will stand till the day of judgment. Every seventy years we shall save the expense of building all England over again! Say nine-tenths of the expense—say three-fourths of it (allowing for the changes necessary or permissible in the change of things)—and, in rigorous arithmetic, such is the saving possible to you—lying under your nose there soliciting you to pick it up, by the mere act of behaving like sons of Adam, not like scandalous esurient phantasms and sons of Bel and the Dragon. Here is a thrift of money, if you want money! The money saving would (you can compute in what short length of time) pay your national debt for you, bridge the ocean for you, wipe away your smoky nuisances, your muddy ditto, your miscellaneous ditto, and make the face of England clean again; and all this I reckon as mere zero in comparison with the accompanying improvement to your poor souls, now dead in trespasses and sins, drowned in beer-butts, wine-butts, in gluttonies, slaveries, quackeries, but recalled them to blessed life again, and the sight of heaven and earth, instead of payday and Meux and Co.'s entire. Oh, my bewildered brothers, what foul infernal Circe has come over you, and changed you from men—once really rather noble of their kind—into beavers, into hogs and asses, and beasts of the field or the slum! I declare I had rather die.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

[Did it never occur to Mr. Carlyle that builders are not likely to spend money in erecting structures for the benefit of the ground landlords? Into their possession they would fall as the leases expired, with a *sic vos non vobis adiuvatis*. The cost of building is determined by more practical considerations than the love of "the cheap and nasty," to which the Chelsea sage alone ascribes it.]

SCOTCHMEN IN LONDON.—The number of Scotch in this capital is absurdly overrated. Though London is inhabited by a larger percentage of strangers, or non-natives, than almost any other city in the universe—New York and some American mixtures of cosmopolitan humanity excepted, of course—yet the number of Scotchmen settled here is wonderfully small. Looking again at the official Census returns of 1861, I see it stated that, while only 62 per cent. of the inhabitants of the metropolis were born within its limits, but one per cent. of the mass of strangers was made up of natives of Scotland. The figures are:—Total population of London, 2,383,989; natives of London, 1,741,177; natives of south-eastern counties of England, 222,319; of south midland, 147,132; of eastern counties, 156,592; of south-western, 128,444; of midland counties, 110,801; of Ireland, 106,877; and, finally, natives of Scotland, 35,733. Thus it will be seen that the tendency of the Scotch to go to London is considerably less than the movement in the same direction of the people of any other part of Great Britain and of Ireland. Even foreigners are far more numerous in London than Scotchmen. The Census returns show 47,419 natives of foreign countries, besides 15,389 natives of British colonies—foreigners *de facto*, if not *de jure*. Dividing the inhabitants of London into groups of 10,000, we find that in every such group there are 6,209 natives of the capital—Cockneys *pur sang*, more or less—while 792 are from the south-eastern counties, 524 from the south-midland, 558 from the eastern counties, 458 from the south-western, 381 from Ireland, 223 from foreign and colonial parts, and but 127 from Scotland. Looking to the countries of origin, and taking the figure 1,000 as the population basis, we find that to 1,000 people in Yorkshire there are thirteen Yorkshiremen in London; to 1,000 people in Wales, there are 15 of Welsh birth in London; to 1,000 people in the northern counties, there are 16 northern men by birth in London; but to 1,000 people in Scotland there are not quite 12 Scotchmen in London.—*London Scotsman.*

ROME.—The population of the city in June 1867 amounted to 215,573. Of these 30 are cardinals, 35 bishops, 1,469 priests, and 828 seminarists. The occupants of religious houses number 5,047; 2,832 being monks and 2,215 nuns. The population, according to the above census, had increased 4,872 since June, 1866.

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